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## Recommended Citation

Finnegan, Patrick and Skoog, Jared, "Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Marsha Waind, OTR/L" (2017).  
*Oral History Student Papers*. 15.  
<https://commons.und.edu/ot-oral-histories-papers/15>

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Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Marsha Waind, OTR/L  
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### Abstract

**Objective:** The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the life experiences of Marsha Waind, an occupational therapist since 1975. She graduated from the University of North Dakota (UND) and has practiced in North Dakota for the majority of her career, currently working for Altru Health System as regional services manager. The design was a qualitative study using a life history approach.

**Method:** An in-depth interview was conducted with Marsha in her office in Grand Forks. It was a semi-structured interview, with many pre-set questions and a couple of follow-up questions. Themes regarding her life experiences and leadership were created and compared to the practice of occupational therapy (OT) over time on a state and national level.

**Results:** Primary categories with corresponding themes resulting from the data analysis process was her education in school and after graduation, Marsha's participation in special interests, her professional growth over time, and the influence of practicing in North Dakota. The findings indicate that Marsha had a strong passion for advocating for OT and her clients throughout her career, and served her clients and profession proudly.

**Conclusion:** Marsha's involvement in leadership and advocacy, as well as gaining certification in specific practice areas, were influential ways Marsha impacted OT practice in North Dakota. Throughout Marsha's career, occupational therapy has transitioned from an arts-and-crafts focus towards occupation-based, while influential people and continuing education opportunities have impacted her style of practice.

## Introduction

This project, one of 29 life history interviews which are a part of a larger project, is titled *Life Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) in North Dakota and Wyoming*. The purpose of the project is to gather information about the history and evolution of occupational therapy (OT) practice in North Dakota and Wyoming through life histories of individuals who have been influential in developing OT in these two states. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information. This study is intended to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how occupational therapy practice has evolved from its inception to current practice in North Dakota and Wyoming.

The focus of this section was on Marsha Waind an occupational therapist practicing since 1975, with a majority of her career spent in Grand Forks, North Dakota. She was a graduate of the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Program in 1975. Marsha currently works for Altru Health System as the regional services manager. The interview with Marsha took place at her office in the Altru Hospital in Grand Forks, North Dakota. The interview was based on a qualitative research design with a focus on a life history approach. The Kawa Model helped to guide the development of some of the interview questions.

The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the project directors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals as part of the larger project. The researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each specific interview.

## Literature Review

Marsha has served on the North Dakota Board of Occupational Therapy Practice for two terms (3 years long) and her final term expires at the end of 2017. The board was established in 1983 with the purpose of licensing OTR/OTA's and penalizing those who violated their licensure requirements. There are five members on the board, three are occupational therapists, one is an occupational therapy assistant, and the final member is represented from a member of the public. All members are appointed by the state governor (State Historical Society of North Dakota, 2017).

During the time period 1986-2000, membership in the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) emphasized continuing education courses, advocacy for the profession, and assistance to state associations (Reed & Peters, 2010). Marsha's career experiences are aligned with the trends of OT at the time. Marsha worked in her career with insurance companies to help establish occupational therapy as a legit service in the eyes of payers, or the insurance companies. Insurance companies would only cover occupational therapy services if the occupational therapists could justify and provide rationale as to why their service was beneficial

to the client (Reed & Peters, 2010). In the 1980s, OT certification boards such as the American Occupational Therapy Certification Board distinguished themselves separately from AOTA, putting an emphasis on certification on a national level (Reed & Peters, 2010). Naturally, this trickled down to impact leaders in individual states, such as Marsha. In the 1990s, occupational therapy educational programs were no longer accredited by the American Medical Association and began to be governed by AOTA (Reed & Peters, 2010). This would impact Marsha's roles as an occupational therapy leader in North Dakota.

### **Theory**

The theory used to guide the research was the Kawa Model. The Kawa Model looks at life as if it were a river starting with birth and flowing until death (Leadley, 2015). The river banks and river bottom represent the context in which a person lives their life or performs occupations. Rocks in the river represent circumstances and factors that the person views as problematic in their life. Driftwood in the river represent personal characteristics that the person possesses that hinder their performance in occupation. Finally, the space between the river banks, rocks and driftwood where the water flows represents the opportunities that the person has to let life flow. The Kawa Model guided the study in the development of interview questions. As researchers we developed some questions relating to Marsha's life. The goal was to develop questions that related to the context in which she practiced, the river bank and bottom. Other questions were related to barriers in life that slowed the progression of her career or personal development, the rocks. Another question was about personal characteristics that influenced her career and professional development, the driftwood. Finally, a question related to opportunities she was given and where she felt successful with her life work, the open spaces where water flowed. Throughout the research project the Kawa Model was influential in guiding the process because the researchers looked at the different aspects of the river, her life or career, to understand the different components that have influenced her.

### **Description of Participant**

Information was gathered from the interview and Marsha's curriculum vitae which she provided via email. Marsha graduated from UND in 1975 with an occupational therapy degree. She became exposed to OT in high school when she was volunteering at a hospital. Throughout her practice, she has worked in many settings. She began her career working in a nursing home in Fargo, and lived in Denver for a time before relocating back to Grand Forks. Marsha became a certified hand therapist, is lymphedema certified, and particularly enjoyed working with burn patients throughout her career. Marsha's career is characterized by many leadership and advocacy experiences. She served as district chair of the Red River district of the North Dakota Occupational Therapy Association (NDOTA) before serving as state president. In this role, she would travel to national conferences and interact with other leaders throughout the country. She is currently chair of the NDOTA practice board. Throughout her career, Marsha has learned to

advocate for the profession. She worked with Blue Cross and Blue Shield to help them understand their payment policies and advocated for OT to change policies toward therapy if needed. She also was a pioneer in organizing the outside peer reviewer system in North Dakota with NDOTA. Marsha also helped establish the OT licensure law in North Dakota.

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design**

The design is a qualitative study that uses a life history approach. The purpose was to focus on the participant and their involvement in occupational therapy practice in North Dakota and/or Wyoming. The design allowed the researchers to study the evolution of the participant's occupational therapy career as the profession changed over time. In the qualitative life history approach the participants were able to discuss with the researchers, milestones that they felt were important that influenced their careers or the occupational therapy profession as a whole.

### **Participant Selection**

The participant interviewed was assigned to researchers from a list of participants that was purposively gathered by the project directors. The individuals on the participant list were purposively selected by the project directors because they were occupational therapists who had an influence on occupational therapy practice in North Dakota or Wyoming. Pairs of researchers were then assigned an occupational therapist from the participant list. Informed consent was signed prior to the interview.

### **Data Collection**

The data collected for this study was gathered through a face to face interview with Marsha and two University of North Dakota second-year OT students. The interview was arranged via email. Prior to the interview Marsha sent the researchers a copy of her curriculum vitae (CV) and a signed informed consent form. The CV provided the researchers with background information relating to the career of Marsha, her professional development, and her educational background. The interview took place in the office of Marsha at Altru Hospital in Grand Forks, ND. The interview was audio recorded using a computer and a cell phone. The cell phone was used as a backup to the computer to ensure that the interview was captured in full. Data collection took about one hour with the recorded interview being 48 minutes and 35 seconds. The remainder of the hour was spent with Marsha and the researchers becoming acquainted with one another. The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the project directors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals as part of the larger project. The researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each specific interview. An artifact that Marsha provided during the interview was a manual about using a loom that she used while in OT

school. The manual was then given to the project directors to be added to the UND Special Collections archives.

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness was established during this study by both researchers completing reflective journals periodically throughout the process. In these journals the researchers reflected on the process of the study, expressed their thoughts, and posed questions that they had. During the process of transcribing the interview the researchers added memos to the transcription recording subjective thoughts. By completing the reflective journals the researchers were able to look at the situation and identify aspects that went well and those that needed improvement. By adding memos to the transcription the researchers provided subjective data that helped to put the transcription into context. The memos also helped highlight the distinction between objective and subjective data. The journals and memos reinforced the reliability and validity because the researchers were able to ensure that the purpose of the study was captured. Following the interview Marsha emailed the researchers follow up information that she felt was relevant to the interview questions but was not answered during the course of the interview. The information from the email was then added to the end of the transcription.

### **Data Analysis**

The audio recording was transcribed verbatim and supporting documents were reviewed. Data was analyzed by first reading through the transcription and listing off possible codes that were found throughout. Next, individual quotes representing her character and life experiences were cut out and taped onto note cards with these codes written on them. The note cards were separated, with each code having several note cards with various quotations. From these codes, four categories were generated; with further analysis corresponding themes emerged for each of the four categories (see Appendix ). Category 1, Education/School, included the following codes: Arts & Crafts, frames of reference, and education/schooling. The codes for Category 2, Professional Growth, included: early career, collaboration, and continuing education. Category 3, North Dakota Influences, included the following codes: rural health, collaboration, and challenges. Category 4, Special Interests, included the following codes: advocacy, membership, and leadership.

The Kawa model guided this process because the researchers examined all of the information that Marsha told them, including positives, negatives, and supplemental factors. These represent the flow of the river, the driftwood, the rocks, and the riverbanks present throughout her life. There was a short timeline between transcribing the information and coding it. This was beneficial to the process, as the information was still fresh in the researcher's minds and allowed for more accurate coding.

### **Findings/Results**

The following themes emerged for each identified category and are reflective of Marsha's life history and experiences.

#### **Education/School:**

*Arts and crafts were a primary focus at the time she went to school.*

*She is hesitant to support the transition of occupational therapy to a doctoral level*

*Marsha was open to learning about and applying different frames of reference and models into practice.*

Marsha's school experience, knowledge of frames of reference, and opinion of degree progression were factors in developing the education/school category. Speaking of her education, she claimed "when I went to school we spent a lot of time in crafts".

#### **Professional Growth:**

*Her early career was dynamic as the profession continued to shift toward occupation based care.*

*Marsha was passionate about collaboration with certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA) and other disciplines for best treatment of clients.*

*She practiced in many different settings.*

Her personal characteristics, commitment to OT/OTA collaboration, and early career experiences contributed to the formation of the professional growth category. One example of Marsha's advocacy is her respect for COTAs, as she stated "over the years I have always been a very strong advocate for the COTA. I think that it's really important to have that understanding and have that partnership".

#### **North Dakota Influences:**

*The rural context of North Dakota was a barrier to degree progression and a challenge to providing client care.*

*Marsha was an influential person in helping to integrate insurance into her North Dakota practice.*

*Many people have been influential in shaping who she is professionally and personally.*

The rural context of health care in North Dakota influenced the opportunities available for Marsha. She is quoted as saying "so, as far as barriers, would be probably be the, I don't want to say lack of opportunities but kind of". The North Dakota Influences category was characterized by codes including barriers, rural health, and influential people. Speaking about her current role as Altru Hospital's regional services manager, she stated "we're really seeing a lot of very rural patients. It was great that we could go out and see patients wherever they were, in their home or what not".



**Special Interests:**

*Advocacy for the profession and clients is important to the values that Marsha has for herself. Leadership and membership in organizations within North Dakota was an interest of hers. Her special interests including certification in hand therapy and lymphedema treatment added special meaning to her daily practice.*

One example of special interests is her involvement in Medicare regulations. “The other thing I guess I haven’t mentioned is one of the things that kind of became my, a strongpoint or I kind of let out was understanding Medicare regs”.

**Final Assertions:**

1. From the categories and themes, an overarching assertion about Marsha’s life experiences was developed. Marsha’s involvement in leadership and advocacy, as well as gaining certification in specific practice areas, were influential ways Marsha impacted OT practice in North Dakota.
2. Throughout Marsha’s career, occupational therapy has transitioned from an arts-and-crafts focus towards occupation-based, while influential people and continuing education opportunities have impacted her style of practice.

**Discussion/Conclusion**

Marsha’s involvement in leadership and advocacy, as well as gaining certification in specific practice areas, were influential ways Marsha impacted OT practice in North Dakota. One way Marsha has been a leader in OT in North Dakota is through serving on the North Dakota Board of Occupational Therapy Practice. She also worked diligently to advocate for therapists in rural parts of the state. These actions are very much aligned to the trend of the time, as advocating for the profession was a major theme of the time period 1970-1985 (Reed & Peters, 2010). One thing that highlighted this period is persistent advocacy for OT. Marsha’s career was also highlighted by many certifications, including in hand therapy and lymphedema. While having these experiences the field of occupational therapy evolved from an arts-and-crafts focus to more occupation-based, while influential people and continuing education opportunities impacted her style of practice. These influential people include professors, coworkers, clients, and continuing education instructors.

Relating to the Kawa model, Marsha’s life experiences and contexts have shaped her career. The Kawa model focuses on the flow of life, or water portion, of a person’s life (Leadley, 2015). This involves all of Marsha’s life experiences. The barriers, represented by rocks in the model, are obstacles which Marsha has encountered in her career. This includes practicing in a rural setting. The driftwood includes personal characteristics and factors in her life. For Marsha, this includes her perseverance and dedication to advocacy. The contexts surrounding her life are represented by the river walls of the Kawa model. Her environmental, personal, and professional experiences have both challenged and supported her practice as an occupational therapist, as well as progress the field of OT in North Dakota.

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- Reed, K.L., & Peters, C. O. (October 6, 2008). Occupational therapy values and beliefs, Part IV; A time of professional identity, 1970-1985-Would the real therapist please stand up? *OT Practice*, 13(18),15-18.
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## **Appendix**

**Visual Data Display: Life History of Marsha Waind, OTR/L**  
Patrick Finnegan, MOTS; Jared Skoog, MOTS

<b>Codes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing education</li> <li>Leadership</li> <li>Advocacy</li> <li>Membership</li> <li>Peer Review System</li> <li>Education/School</li> <li>Arts &amp; Crafts</li> <li>Degrees Progression</li> <li>Frames of Reference</li> <li>Influential People</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal characteristics</li> <li>OT/OTA Collaboration</li> <li>Occupation Based</li> <li>Early Career</li> <li>Collaboration</li> <li>Barriers</li> <li>Challenges</li> <li>Insurance</li> <li>Rural Health</li> </ul>
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<b>Categories</b>	<u><b>Education/School</b></u> -Education/School -Arts & Crafts -Degree Progression -Frames of Reference	<u><b>Professional Growth</b></u> -Personal Characteristics -OT/OTA Collaboration -Occupation Based -Early Career -Collaboration	<u><b>North Dakota Influences</b></u> -Barriers -Challenges -Insurance -Rural Health -Influential People	<u><b>Special Interests</b></u> -Continuing Education -Leadership -Advocacy -Membership -Peer Review System
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<b>Themes</b>	--Arts and crafts were a primary focus at the time that she went to school. --She is hesitant to support the transition of occupational therapy to a doctoral level. --Marsha was open to learning about and applying different frames of reference and models into practice	--Early career was dynamic as the profession continued to shift more toward occupation based care --Marsha was passionate about collaboration with COTA's and other disciplines for best treatment of the clients --Practiced in many differed settings	--The rural context of ND was a barrier to degree progression and a challenge to providing client care --Marsha was an influential person in helping to integrate insurance into her ND practice. --Many people have been influential in shaping who she is professionally and personally	--Advocacy for the profession and clients is important to the values that Marsha has for herself --Leadership & membership in organizations within ND was an interest of hers -- Special interests of hers including certification in hand therapy and lymphedema treatment added special meaning to her daily practice.
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<b>Assertion</b>	Marsha's involvement in leadership and advocacy, and gaining certification in specific practice areas, were influential ways Marsha impacted OT practice in North Dakota. Throughout Marsha's career, occupational therapy has transitioned from an arts-and-crafts focus towards occupation-based, while influential people and continuing education opportunities have impacted her style of practice.
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